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PUTNAM TRAVELER

Supporting Tourism & Communities in Northeastern, CT & Beyond...

ISSUE NO. 48 • NORTHEASTERN, CONNECTICUT

DOWNTOWN MAP INSIDE • OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2015

For an afternoon, a day, or a weekend...come and enjoy Northeastern Connecticut!

WALKTOBER

Autumn is a spectacular time to visit the northeastern corner of Connecticut. Bring your camera, this season of color and beauty offers picture perfect scenery everywhere you turn. Explore the area by joining one of the many "Walktober" events happening through November.

Visit local orchards to pick-your-own apples, pumpkins and Christmas Trees! Join us for local events such as the Great Pumpkin Festival in Putnam (where you can even ride in by train) and the famous Roseland Cottage Craft Fair in Woodstock. Start your Christmas shopping early by visiting the area's art galleries & shops where you will find unique and on-of-a-kind gifts for everyone on your list. When you are ready for a meal local restaurants will no doubt be offering creative seasonal menu items. At the end of the day enjoy live entertainment including: The Rocky Horror Picture Show and It's a Wonderful Life at the Bradley Playhouse. We hope you enjoy this issue of The Putnam Traveler!

INSIDE:

Local Advertisers...Local Real Estate...Downtown Putnam Events... Walktober...Walk, stroll, pedal or paddle to explore the beauty of the Last Green Valley, with events planned through November!...The hills of Hampton are alive with music...learn more about ***The Davis Duo*** who bring music lovers together from around the world and around the corner...Discover an antique lovers dream at ***Coventry Arts & Antiques*** located in nearby Coventry, CT...Planning to relocate yourself or a loved one, downsize or sell a home?...Learn how ***Clean $late Estate*** can make the entire process of cleaning out an estate less overwhelming and in many cases less emotional...If you love the outdoors, discover the ***James L. Goodwin State Forest in Hampton*** located just off Route 6 featuring 14 mixed-use trails waiting to be explored...Local resident and sculpture ***Nick Swearer*** shares his love of sculpture with the community...***Glow Yoga***...the area's first aerial yoga studio has opened its doors in Putnam...and a listing of ***Seasonal & Holiday Events!***

Downtown Putnam & Area Maps • Businesses • Local Activities • Shopping & Events

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Printing of the Putnam Traveler provided by **101 Business Solutions,** Brooklyn, CT
Mailing services provided by **The Laser Letter Shop**, Pomfret, CT

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Discover PUTNAM CONNECTICUT

Vintage Feel. Modern Appeal.

Heading into the final months of the year, Putnam will be full of fun activities for all to enjoy. Visitors from near and far are invited to explore seasonal festivals, boutique shopping, great theatre and entertainment, antiques and art galleries, as well as a variety of delectable dining experiences. Discover why Putnam is one of Connecticut's favorite communities!

The final event of **2015 First Fridays** season on **Friday**, **October 2nd.** After five exciting evenings of art in the twentieth century, we arrive at the dawn of the digital age in the twenty-first century. October's event will celebrate the major shift toward computer-generated art – a medium that has changed the way fine art, film and music are created and consumed. Speaking of consumed…for the second year in a row, the October event will feature the First Fridays Zombie Fashion Show.

Later in the month, **The Great Pumpkin Festival** will take over downtown, from Union Square to Riverfront Commons. Starting at 10:00 am on **Saturday, October 24th**, this annual festival will bring many favorites of the fall season to Putnam.

Halloween is a favorite holiday among children and adults alike and on **Friday, October 30th**, from 5:00 to 7:00 pm, businesses and organizations spanning from Jade Garden to Union Square will be handing out candy for the annual **Trick-or-Treat Street**.

As fall gives way to winter, the holiday season begins. Signs of this festive time of year appear all over Putnam. Twinkling lights, holiday wreaths and Christmas trees set the stage for two favorite holiday events.

On **Friday, November 27th at 4:00 pm**, Santa will visit Riverfront Commons. Children are invited to meet with Santa. Every child receives a candy cane along with hot chocolate and special treats. This event is sponsored by Putnam Recreation Department and WINY Radio.

For the last 14 years, thousands of people have flocked to downtown Putnam on the Sunday after Thanksgiving for the Annual **Holiday Dazzle Light Parade**. Complete with floats built by local businesses, organizations and residents, the parade celebrates the joy and whimsy of the holiday season. This year, the event will take place on **Sunday, November 29th at 5:00 pm**.

Come to Putnam and enjoy the many events happening over the next several months! Also stay tuned for more great events in 2016! Coming in February the **Fire & Ice Festival** *returns to downtown Putnam – ice and chocolate carvings and competitions, entertainment and great restaurant offerings will add some heat to the chilly winter season!*

Putnam
BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

For more information on any events, visit www.discoverputnam.com

Like

DO YOU WALKTOBER!

The question on the lips of everyone this time of year seems to be "Do you Walktober?" Celebrating its 25th year, Walktober is packed with amazing autumn adventures in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor. The 35 towns in eastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts that make up this region are brimming with natural beauty, historic treasures, thriving farms, unique tastes, sips, and shops, and the most enthusiastic Walktober leaders you'll ever meet, ready to help you explore and discover it all. Synched with the brisk days of Autumn's arrival and the brilliant explosion of color, Walktober is a guaranteed winner!

What started out as a "Walking Weekend" many years ago has expanded to more than a month's worth of adventures. Walks, strolls, bike rides, paddles, and events galore, all led by passionate volunteer leaders, put new twists on old familiar places or introduce you to eye-opening and brand new discoveries! Most Walktober choices are free and last for a few hours.

Walktober is coordinated each year by The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV). This year, with 190 unique guided opportunities, you'll have the chance to lace up, grab your walking stick, leash the pup, shine up your kayak, tempt your taste buds, step back in history, learn to photograph nature, tackle a trail and more during the region's most invigorating time of year.

The Walktober tradition of providing a family-friendly atmosphere also continues. Scavenger hunts, "I-Spys," crafts and more are included to appeal to youth and engage them with our natural resources.

Since The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor is still 77% forests and farmlands, you can attend Walktober farm tours and meet furry and feathered friends of all kinds, like alpaca, turkeys, bison and cows. There are corn mazes to navigate, or a tethered hot air balloon lifting you to a bird's eye view of the spectacular fall beauty in The Last Green Valley. Walk along wooded trails, stroll by babbling streams, hike up to sensational views, or learn about forest products made from our region's stately trees.

The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor is also deeply rich in history. During Walktober you can stand where the famous Ghost Train used to travel on rails now long gone, learn about the mills that once drove our economy, and seek out cemetery stones to tell us stories of history past.

Some towns, like Putnam, Willimantic and Norwich have worked together to offer multiple Walktober experiences wrapped up for a day full of fun. You can stay in town to enjoy and explore the area for the whole day!

Bike riders, saddle up! There are 5 pedaling choices this year, all of which leave the road well-traveled for off-road trail adventures. Once you find your favorite trail, you can return for another ride with friends.

Paddlers unite! Be ready to learn as you paddle and float with knowledgeable leaders with 4 varied options. Once you discover a new paddling place, you will want to return and show off your discovery to paddling pals.

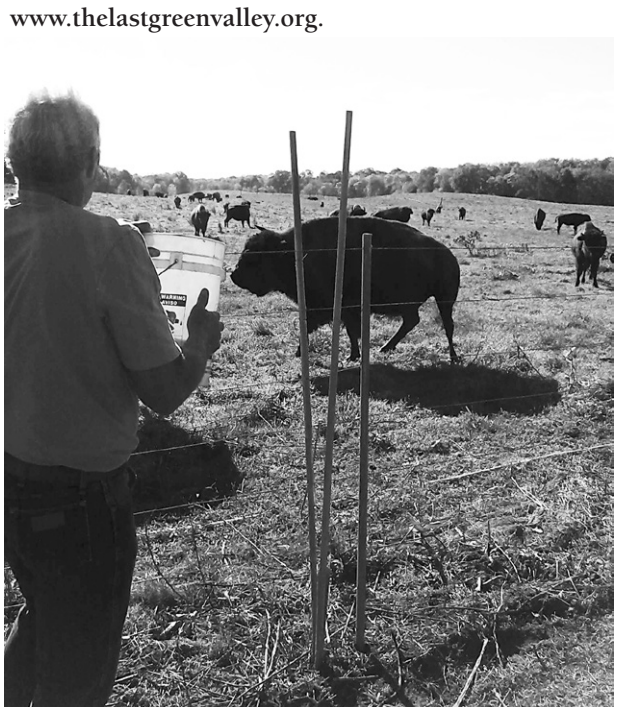
Discover all there is to know about Walktober in TLGV's free annual jam-packed Walktober brochure. The brochure details dates, times, descriptions, difficulty level, contact info and more to help you start planning your Walktober adventures now! The Walktober brochure also has some new contests and challenges for TLGV members this year.

To receive your own Walktober brochure: email **mail@tlgv.org; call 860-774-3300;** download a PDF from the website **www.thelastgreenvalley.org**; or pick one up at any town hall, library or information kiosk within the region. All updates, additions and cancellations will be posted on the Walktober page on TLGV's website and Facebook page, so please check them often.

Last year nearly 60,000 participants enjoyed Walktober, providing a major economic boost to the region. Walktober grows each year with no slowdown in sight. Do you Walktober? This year everyone is invited to "DO WALKTOBER!"

Want to explore more? Don't stop after Walktober. Keep that adventurous spirit year-round. You can return to these places throughout the year. Bring family and friends! Use TLGV's annual Explore! Guide as your #1 resource to the region. TLGV also offers monthly Member Programs & Acorn Adventures, plus has Ranger Talks on various topics available to present to your civic groups.

The Last Green Valley is a National Heritage Corridor – the last stretch of dark night sky in the coastal sprawl between Boston and Washington, D.C. The Last Green Valley, Inc. works for you in the National Heritage Corridor. We help you to care for it, enjoy it and pass it on. For more information visit **www.thelastgreenvalley.org.**



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The Davis Duo

The gentle, rolling hills of Hampton are indeed alive with the sound of music. Mark and Beverly Davis, who perform internationally and locally, have taken their passion for the mandolin and guitar to a remarkable level. Through their efforts and organizational skills, classical music, contemporary pieces and unique combinations of performers and instruments are offered to music lovers from around the world and around the corner.

BY NANCY P. WEISS

The story behind the development of four important musical groups begins with Mark, a Hampton native, who attended Brown University, where he earned a degree in the history of religion, followed by a degree in classical guitar from Rhode Island College and a Masters in Music from the University of Connecticut, where he taught for more than a decade. In 1989 he became the director of the Providence Mandolin Orchestra. Davis performed guitar and mandolin music internationally and appeared on many CD recordings. In 2001 he began appearing with his wife, Beverly.

Beverly Davis grew up outside New York City and received a degree from Keene State in music education with an emphasis on classical guitar. She moved to Rhode Island and began working in banking. She joined the Providence Mandolin Orchestra and began performing nationally and internationally with Mark.

Through North Meadow House Concerts, Mark and Beverly began offering occasional performances at their 18th century home in 2009. The venue, a charming house with a large, acoustically designed room, feels like a salon with musicians seated on a raised dais performing in close proximity to the audience.

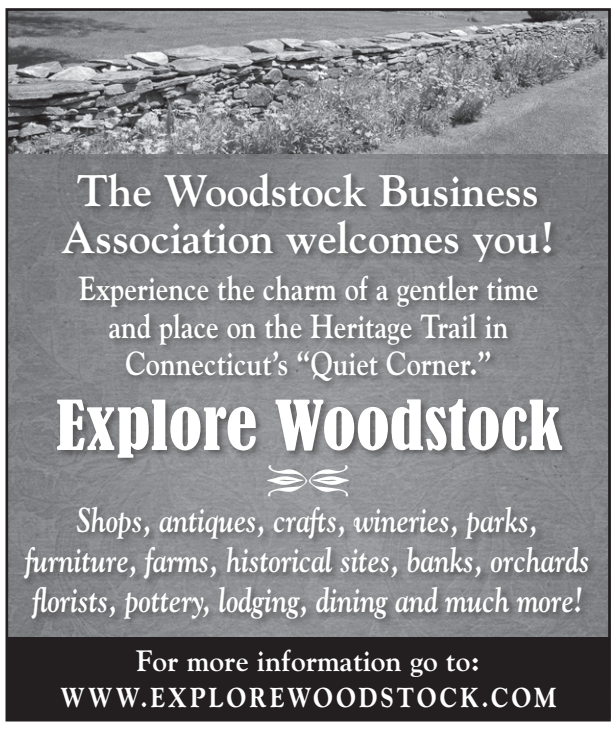
"We know tons of people from international touring. We host the most amazing European, Australian and South American guest artists from the world of mandolin and guitar, the focus of our concerts. It is a natural space for classical music, including new work," said Mark, who has traveled all over the world, including twice to Australia where he was invited to be head of the first guitar section and to Germany, where he was the conductor at a festival.

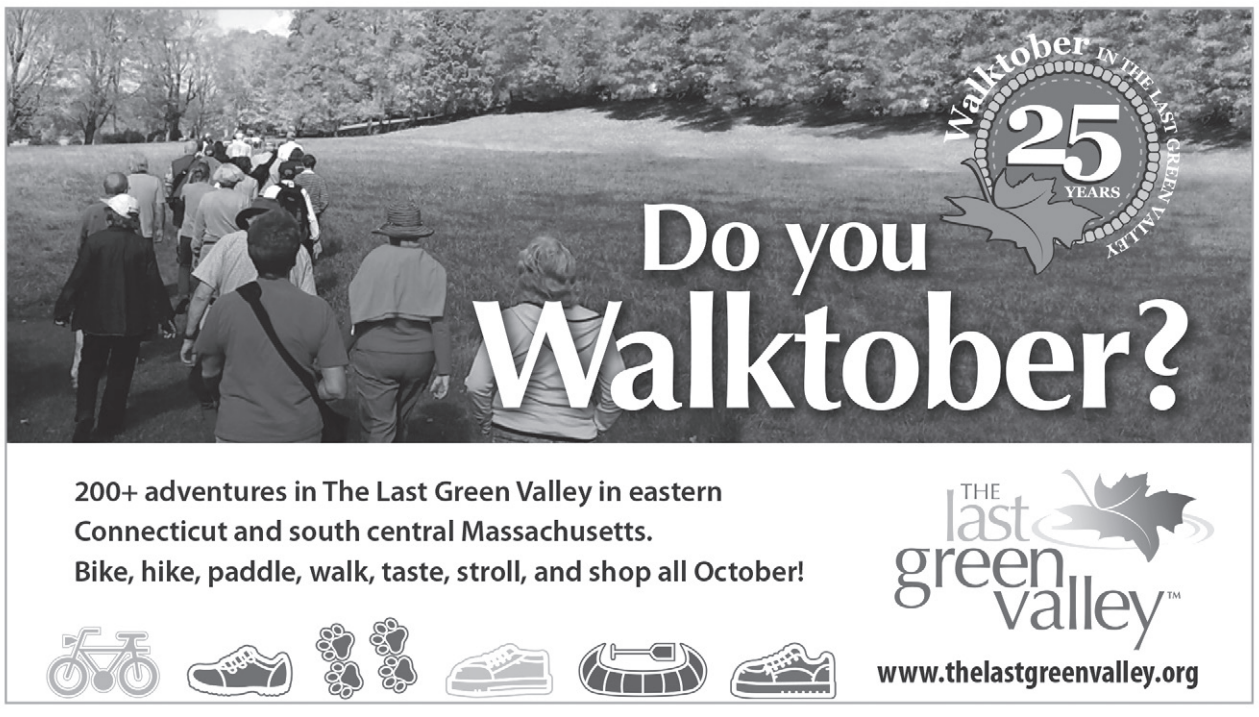
Performers and guests at the house concerts are treated to Beverly's special hospitality. "We like to create the optimal experience for the musicians, who often stay overnight and mingle with the audience over wine and food," she said.

On October 23 there will be a house concert by the Finger Lakes Guitar Quartet and North Meadows Farm. Advanced registration is required.

North Meadows House Concerts will sponsor a program by the New American Mandolin Ensemble (NAME) on Saturday, November 14, 2015 at the Hampton Community Center. The former Hampton Grange has excellent acoustics and a large venue.

Seven professional level players, who performed last year in Germany, formed NAME. They have applied to play at an international festival in Spain in 2016. The





group focuses on a variety of music, including exciting new work by contemporary American composer. The Davises are promoting the group in a variety of venues and will make a live video of the performance at the Hampton Community Center for wide distribution. The group performs classical music with the energy of a rock and roll concert.

The New American Mandolin Ensemble will also perform on Saturday, April 2,2016 at 8:00 p.m. at the Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Harford as part of the Connecticut Guitar Society series. **(www.ctguitar.org)**

A third group, Café Trio + was formed recently because Mark Davis noted: "I've always loved the sound of accordion with mandolin. I invited well-know musician Jan Jungden, an accordion player, to join Beverly and me and Hampton native, Louie Chatey, a bass player, to perform together. We played at the Bread Box Theatre in Willimantic and the Vanilla Bean Café in Pomfret. We offer an eclectic mix of international styles including Brazilian, klezmer, Celtic and folk music."

The Mark and Beverly Davis duo completes the roster of performing groups and is at the heart of it all. The couple began playing together in 2001 as a guitar duo, seeking out international material others were not playing. They found melodies from the British Isles and soon added Spanish pieces. They recorded their first CD, "Ayres and Dances for two guitars", at Signature Sound in Pomfret, CT in 2006.

The Davises are optimistic about the future of mandolin music because of a major change in visibility for the instrument. Garrison Keillor is retiring from the popular radio show, A Prairie Home Companion. His replacement, Chris Thile is a mandolinist. Mark and Beverly hope to bring NAME to the show and share their love of the mandolin and other stringed instruments with a nationwide audience.

The Mark and Beverly Davis Duo will perform at the Hingham Public Library in Hingham, MA on Sunday, November 8,2015.

As the light filtered through the windows of the large room where the Davis hold house concerts, Mark reflected on the life he and Beverly have created to promote and perform the music they love on instruments they treasure.

"This is our dream: a quiet place in the country from which all this music can emanate. We hold workshops, concerts and give private lesson as a musical center in the countryside of Northeastern Connecticut."

Mark and Beverly Davis may live in an 18th century house, but they are actively using modern methods to promote their work. Follow them on these links:

North Meadow Music – our groups on the internet:

MARK M. DAVIS Home page:
http://markmdavis.com/

MARK AND BEVERLY DAVIS Home page:
http://markmdavis.com/mark_and_beverly_davis
Mark and Beverly Davis CD:
http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/mbdavis

NEWAMERICANMANDOLINENSEMBLE Home page:
www.namandolinensemble.com

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Memories & Memorabilia at Coventry Arts & Antiques

Coventry Arts & Antiques is surprisingly busy for a hot summer morning in August. Customers climb steep granite steps and pass two-story tall white pillars to enter a world of the past. Narrow shelves cover the walls of the high ceilinged main room. Furniture of all styles and eras fill the entire large space. Every surface is covered with antiques of every imaginable description, from housewares and collectibles to vintage jewelry and memorabilia. A customer could spend twenty minutes browsing in one place in order to see everything before moving on. It is an antique lover's dream.

BY CRIS CADIZ

Born and raised in Putnam, Coventry Arts & Antiques owner Anne Burke comes from a large family that has resided in the Quiet Corner for many years. "There were eleven children in my family, so I still have a lot of roots in that area," she says. She currently lives and works in Coventry, where she has taught third grade for twenty-seven years.

"It's very eclectic," says Anne of her store. "I'm not a purist when it comes to antiques, since I am combining art and antiques." The store offers a wide variety of collectibles, furniture, housewares, glassware, decorative arts, books, vintage clothing and jewelry, antique and contemporary fine art and much more.

Anne's love of antiques goes back to a visit to her first rummage sale at the church on Grove Street in Putnam. "I remember buying some old things and loving them and thinking how well they were made." Later, she worked at the Antiques Marketplace, where she traded time for sales space. She was first introduced to the historic building where she now lives and has her antiques shop when she started teaching in Coventry. "The teachers used to take the third graders on a tour of the town," she explains. "This building was a landmark on that tour, so I've always had an affinity for it."

In 2009, Anne lost her daughter, Ellen. The pain of this tragedy is still evident in her voice. "That's kind of what brought me here today," she says through barely held back tears. Ellen, a talented artist, attended Pomfret School, where she studied with David Brewster, who helped her develop her gift for art. "She struggled with bipolar depression. So I lost her to that illness," says Anne. "On the first anniversary, I had an art exhibit at the gallery across the street here."

Laurie Bidwell ran it at that time. One of Laurie's missions was to support local artists and offer art as a healing form. "The exhibit was very well received and was a good healing process for me," says Anne. While gallery sitting there that summer, a for sale sign appeared across the street at the historic former Wellwood Store. "I was just driven to do it," she says. So Anne bought the building and opened it as Coventry Arts & Antiques in 2011.

"For me it's a nice way to share Ellen's work and her story with other people." Ellen's art is displayed in the "gallery room" off the main part of the store. Her work is sophisticated and somewhat dark and haunting. The other walls of this room feature a colorful variety of artists' work for sale, including a number of Coventry artists as well as

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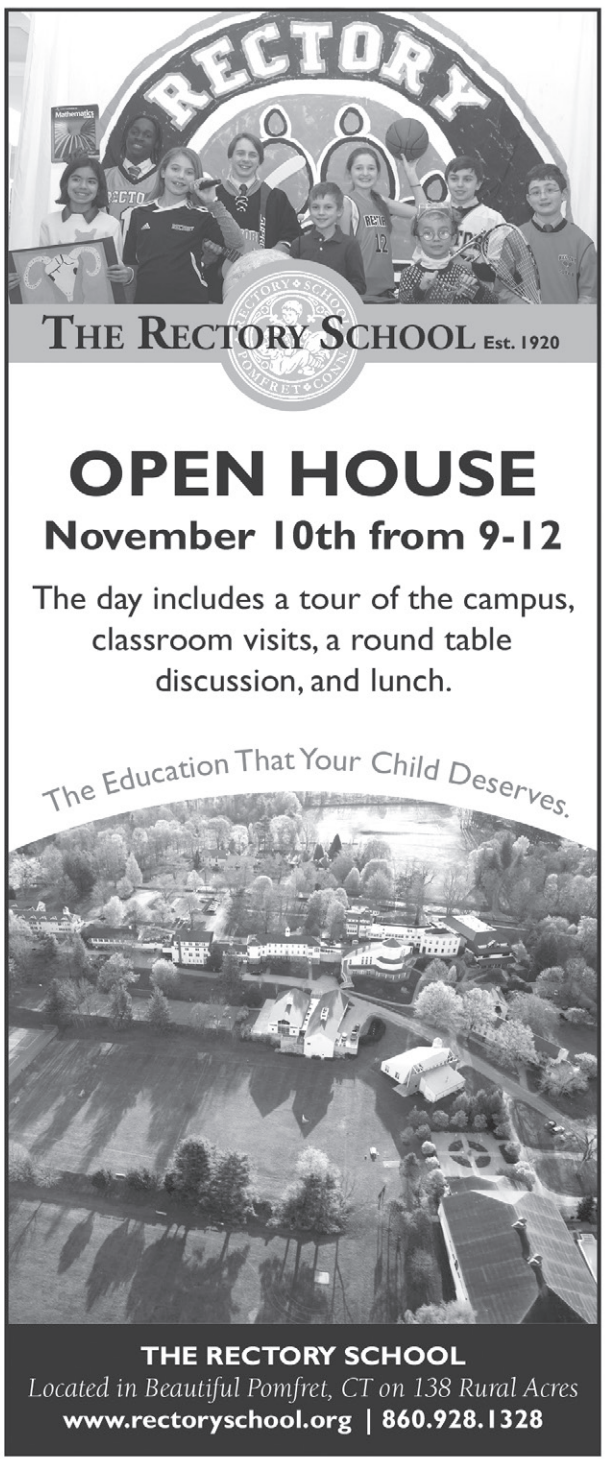
other Connecticut talent. The house part of the store (where Anne and her partner also live) has two small, low ceilinged rooms open to the public where Anne displays both art and antiques. "This is the oldest part of the house," she says. "This was built in the late 1700s and they say this was the first store."

Anne sees running the shop full-time as her retirement project, after she leaves teaching. "Although it is a lot of work!" she laughs. Another goal of running the store is to preserve the historic building in which it resides. Known as the historic Wellwood Store, after a family that owned and ran it from 1905 to 1963, the white-columned Greek Revival structure was built in 1820. However, an earlier section of the building was built in 1756. A town plaque across the street boasts that the building is the oldest continuously run general store in the United States. "We want to keep the history of the building alive for the next person who comes in to own it," she says.

A visit to Anne's shop would be part of a great day trip. "People might wonder why they'd want to travel all the way to Coventry, but a lot of people in Putnam will go to the Mansfield Flea Market and we are just two miles away," she says. She also recommends the popular Coventry Farmer's Market and the historic Bidwell Tavern or the Lakeside Restaurant for food & drink.

Coventry Arts and Antiques is located at 1140 Main Street in Coventry. They are open Wednesday – Sunday from 10 -5. For more information, call (860) 498-0352, visit www.coventryartsandantiques.com or find them on Facebook.



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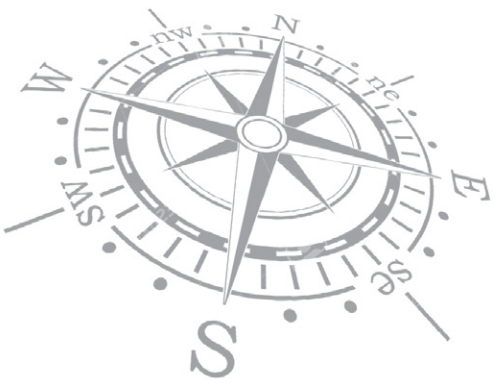

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Clean $late Estate: Clean-Outs with a Heart

After six years in the property cleanout business, John Nagle knows how hard it is for people to part with the objects in their lives. He has stories of clients for whom cleaning out a family home to sell was heartbreaking. He has seen tears fall at the sight of an empty room and heard laughter over a box of family photographs discovered in a closet.

BY CRIS CADIZ

John had run a successful landscaping service for almost thirty years when he decided to start his new business. While doing a lot of work for realtors, he saw a need for an honest, reliable and efficient company to go into homes, clear them out, and handle the hassle and emotional strain of this job. Clean $late Estate deals with senior downsizing and foreclosure, garage, residential and commercial cleanouts. Because of his landscaping business, Clean $late Estate is also a valuable "one-stop-shop" resource for realtors because they can do house cleanouts plus landscaping and exterior cleanup services such as power washing.

John employs five people and can gather a crew of up to twelve for bigger jobs. His team is experienced and professional. "We can clean out an average size 2,200 square foot house in half a day or maybe seven hours," he says. They bring a dump truck, trailers, box truck and tackle one room at a time.

In the initial evaluation, John takes pictures of everything that the customer wants removed and writes up a contract based on that exact tally. He walks through the property room-by-room with the customer to see what they are keeping and what needs to go. He determines the labor costs and the cost of trash and hazardous waste removal. Then he figures out the value of the items left (furniture, household goods, etc.), which offsets the costs of the removal. He creates an individual contract for each job. "In some situations they make money, in some situations nobody pays anyone and in some situations the customer pays me," says John.

He recommends that the property owner leave things as they are, as opposed to boxing things up, since he has to determine the value of items as he goes through them anyway. His customers do nothing but tell him what they want to keep and what they want removed. "We tell them no stress...relax and let us take care of everything. If they want to vacuum up after, they can do that. For us, whatever they want gone is gone."

John resells the cleanout items to antique dealers, on Craig's List and E-bay, and so on. Unfortunately, the market for antiques has declined in the past 15 years, so customers often don't get what they hoped in selling them. But John finds that they often do better in paying him for his service (where he guarantees them a certain price) than to try and sell items at auction. John also advertises items on Facebook and by word-of-mouth. He doesn't do flea markets or tag sales. If there are items not worth much but not trash-worthy, he donates them.

"We want to make things as easy for our customers as we can. I am really honest and up front with them." John does research to ensure his valuation is accurate. "You can list it for whatever you want, but I am realistic with people about what it's really worth."

Clean $late Estate does cleanouts throughout southern New England. Although John gets calls from all over the country, most of his business is by referral. "There are guys who do this, like 1-800-JUNK or something, that charge so much by truck, but they don't evaluate things as they go." He cautions people who want to get rid of their own things by having a yard sale or estate sale or selling a few items through the newspaper. "What most homeowners don't know is if someone comes into your house and buys a coffee cup and trips and falls, if you don't have commercial liability insurance, you're bumming… " John recently had a customer who was sued for $35,000 in such a situation. "Clean $late Estate is fully insured and bonded," he emphasizes.

"The emotional strain is huge," John remarks. "That is one of the reasons why I came up with this company is to help clients close this chapter and start a clean slate. It can be really tough, but I feel it's very rewarding because a lot of my clients become friends. A lot of times I will have my guys work and I will go take a walk with my client and just talk about it. Business is business but if you treat a customer like a human being, hopefully they will be there in the future and refer you."

John recalls working with three brothers whose mother had recently passed. "We were going through a closet. They said everything was cleaned up but I go through everything. At the very bottom was this box. It was all WWI pictures and pictures of their father as a kid, their grandfather and great-grandfather. The brothers all gathered around like little kids to go through them. Later they thanked me for finding it."

John sees people so attached to their things because they hold memories. He encourages them to let them go. "I see them looking at an item and they say, 'I can't give this up.' And I say to them, you have it here and you have it here, forever," he says pointing to his head and to his heart. "This thing is only going to tear you up. It's tough but people will call me back and say thank you, you helped. That's what's rewarding; it's not just the business side, it's the personal side."

For more information about Clean Slate Estate, call 800-989-4521 or visit www.cleanslateestate.com.

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HAMPTON'S HIDDEN TREASURE:

The James L. Goodwin Forest & Conservation Education Center

BY CRIS CADIZ

If you love the outdoors, you need to explore the James L. Goodwin State Forest in Hampton located just off Route 6. It is especially pretty in the fall, when autumnal colors reflect off the waters of the 135-acre Pine Acres Lake. This 2,000-acre forest covers more than three square miles and offers recreation for every season of the year. Over 14 miles of multi-use trails, including an equestrian trail and the miles-long Air Line Rail Trail, are open from dawn until dusk, 365 days a year. The forest is well used by hikers, mountain bikers, trail runners, equestrians, snowshoers and cross country skiers. Other activities include boating, letterboxing and youth group camping.

Goodwin Forest also offers a Native Wildlife Garden, a Conservation Education Center, and a museum documenting the history of the forest, which was gifted to the state from conservationist and forester James Lippincott Goodwin in 1964. The Conservation Education Center offers educational programs year-round for all ages. The Center is filled with mounts, skeletons and nests and features a guide that explains different ecosystems of local wildlife. The Center and Museum are open part-time, so please call ahead. Most educational programs are free and open to the public, but registration is requested.

The forest's trail system is maintained by the Friends of Goodwin, a non-profit volunteer organization whose members spend countless hours grooming, blazing and developing trails, maintaining the gardens and supporting the educational programs and events. For more information, visit **www.friendsofgoodwinforest.org.**

The James L. Goodwin Forest is located at 23 Potter Road, Hampton, CT. Call 860-455-9534 or email emma.lorusso@ct.gov. to register for programs.

October Program Schedule at Goodwin Conservation Center

- **Senior Walk: Tuesday**, October 6th 2-4pm Easy to moderate casual walks on forest trails. All ages welcome.

- **Wild Mushroom Foraging:**
  Wednesday, October 7th 10am-12pm
  REGISTRATION REQUIRED
  Member of Connecticut Valley Mycological Society, Connie Borodenko will offer a brief introduction on mushrooms and identification, followed by a walk to collect specimens. Free for FGF members, non-members $5 per person, $10 per family.

- **Gardening Workshop:**
  Saturday, October 10th 10-11:30am
  For experienced gardeners to help answer specific problems, share best practices and how to extend your garden through the fall and winter.

- **Creatures of the Night!**
  Saturday, October 10th 1-3pm
  Some animals only come out at night. What are they doing all night while we are sleeping? Join us for this Halloween-themed program.

- **Nature Crafts: Leaf Art:**
  Monday, October 12th 10am-12pm
  Autumn is the perfect time of year to collect wonderfully-colored leaves. Make a stunning collage of animals, scenes, or even just abstract colors to take home and frame. Ages 6 and up.

- **Long-Distance Guided Hike:**
  Saturday, October 17th 1-4pm
  Enjoy the company of fellow hikers and get some great outdoor exercise on a 5-7 mile hike. Friendly dogs are welcome.

- **The Ecology of Seeds:**
  Wednesday, October 21st 10am-12pm
  Join Juan Sanchez and Emma Lorusso as we learn more about the amazing functions and methodology of seeds.

- **Sounds of the Woods! Flashlight Tour:**
  Friday, October 23rd
  15 minute tours running from 7:00pm-9:00pm
  Join us for a flashlight tour down the Children's Discovery Trail to hear the sounds of the real creatures of the night!

- **Full Moon Hike:** Tuesday, October 27th 7-9pm
  Take a 3-mile hike with Naturalist Emma Lorusso up to Governor's Island guided by the moon.

- **Seasonal Transitions with Juan Sanchez:**
  Saturday, October 31st
  10am-12pm REGISTRATION REQUIRED
  This program and walk will consider the adaptations (both chemical and physiological) that plants, mammals and other wildlife species utilize in order to survive the coming winter.

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SWEARER'S NAKED TRUTH

Nick Swearer, a resident of northeastern Connecticut for more than 35 years, is full of life and energy. He devotes himself to creating sculptures from a variety of cast and fabricated metals, which are imbedded with meaning. From the home and studio he shares with his wife, Joan, a neuropsychologist, that he designed and largely built himself, Swearer creates two and three dimensional forms that demand a response from anyone who sees them.

BY NANCY P. WEISS

Swearer started early. At age 11 he learned how to weld and made a bird sculpture. In his mid-teens he began work on a 40' long iguana fabricated from 12,500 railroad spikes. Four years later, the piece was finished. "Iggy", as the iguana was christened, was purchased for the Science Museum of Minnesota, where it has assumed cult status as a mascot and touchstone for more than 40 years. When the museum was relocated Iggy was removed, the community demanded its return.

Outside of Swearer's studio, stands a life-sized figure of Catrina, a Mexican Day of the Dead symbol, leaning back in a slightly provocative pose. Her long dress, embellished with flowers on the hem, outlines her slender form. The open bodice reveals the skeleton, rib cage, vertebrae, neck bones, leading to her laughing mouth and skull.

It is difficult not to touch her, as she is both repellent as a symbol of death and welcoming as an invitation to enjoy life.

For Swearer, Catrina is an expression of the celebration of life. The graceful, grinning skull figure is indicative of the complexity with which Swearer combines his art and his personal philosophy.

No where is the connection between belief and sculpture more intertwined than in a large series of naked human figures. There is Bill Clinton standing next to Hillary and Jesse Helms, creating different stories for them as they interact with each other and allegorical figures that represent qualities such as, gossip and innuendo.

Because the figures represent the "naked truth", the artist has run up against the taboo of nudity in displaying the work. Nick Swearer feels that museum curators, while often interested in showing his art, are concerned about how they will be perceived by others for doing so. His "humans" explore sexism, racism, ageism and elitism among other qualities and draw the viewer into a conversation about contemporary issues.

Emotion is captured in the giant, Big Brother, a 10' high 6,000-pound giant with outstretched arms that was most recently on public display at Pomfret School. His towering presence in hammered half-inch steel plate, naked except for a reversed fig leaf, casts a long shadow.

Two golden stags leap toward each other on an escarpment. Created from thousands of pounds of metal, twisted and polished, the animals glisten in the sun and appear to protect their territory with incalculable energy. Nearby stands "Arbor" an abstract piece of twining vines embellished here and there with blossoms. The twisted pieces represent the story of the human family with the elders at the base and newer generations climbing toward the sky.

Nick Swearer is driven to create. As one of three sons in a family of artists, he was influenced by his surroundings and has shared his talents with others in a number of artist-in-residence programs. His mother worked in a variety of media, including painting, printmaking. One of his brothers works with stained glass, a material Swearer has also embraced. Both of his parents fostered his love of art and supported his efforts from childhood, when he saw a man weld two parts of a car together and decided that he would buy a welding machine.

When asked how he thinks about what he will make, he said: "It is a process that begins in my mind's eye. It is a way of working through. It goes through changes. The process is what it is all about. I usually don't like something when it is finished because I know what more I can do. It leads me on to the next project. I have to do it for my own soul."

The public will get to see Swearer's work at The Empty Spaces Project/ Gallery on Main Street in Putnam, CT opening on October 2 as part of First Friday. Check the website: www. TheEmptySpacesProject.org.

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Glow Aerial Yoga & Wellness Studio Opens in Downtown Putnam.

The area's first aerial yoga studio has opened its doors. Aerial yoga is a popular new trend in the worldwide yoga community that uses silk hammocks that support the body in various yoga positions to encourage the body to release, align and relax. The highlight of an aerial yoga class for many is the freedom experienced within anti-gravity poses, when being safely suspended only a short distance off the floor. The intention behind blending the support of the hammock and the anti-gravity component with a traditional yoga practice is to encourage the body to release, realign, and relax. "It's a great way for people to learn yoga, and a great way to deepen an existing yoga practice," according to Lori McDermott, a Pomfret resident and Glow's owner/director.

"I get the opportunity to see people's faces light up in every class," stated Lori. Lori has been a yoga student for 20 years, and is a 500-hour Registered Yoga Teacher, Licensed Unnata Aerial Yoga Teacher, Professional Level Kripalu Yoga Teacher, and Integrative Nutrition Coach. Lori has been teaching yoga in and around the Quiet Corner since 1999, and owned the Yoga Glow studio in Putnam in 2003-2005.

"The sense of freedom that aerial yoga provides, the ability to fly, to float, to do things you have never done before, and more importantly—to do things you never before believed that you could do—that's when the shift takes place in people; that's when I see faces light up. That's the gift of yoga, and that's why the word, 'glow' is meaningful to me."

Lori teaches Unnata Aerial Yoga, a style that blends traditional yoga with aerial yoga postures. The word, "unnata" in Sanskrit means, "to elevate," both in body and in mind. "People who have never tried yoga before are now being drawn to experience it because of the aerial component, and those who practice yoga learn how to support and deepen an existing yoga practice—it's a win-win situation for all."

Two aerial yoga poses stand out for most students in the aerial yoga experience. The first is backstraddle, where one enters an inversion by first going backwards while supported in the hammock to hang safely just a few inches from the floor. "The combination of these components makes backstraddle a high point in the practice for most—it's exhilarating and fun once experienced—people want to do it again and again." Another popular pose is aerial corpse pose, where students lie down inside the hammock and float just an arm's length away from the floor. "The feedback from students is that they feel protected and lightweight--which encourages the most important piece of the practice—learning to relax and release tension to promote balance and well-being," stated Lori.

"Day in and day out people tend to perform the same repetitive motions with their bodies, and thought processes, too, become very linear and task oriented. In yoga one gets to explore their full range of movement, literally breathe life into their entire body and mind, which helps one feel lighter and brighter," according to Lori. "The nature of the aerial components brings both depth because it is new and levity because it is fun to that process.

In addition to aerial yoga, Glow offers wellness programs that include free essential oils classes and affordable health-coach supported programs that focus on how to use whole foods to uncover your unique blueprint for eating in order to achieve healthy weight/weight loss, increased energy, better sleep, and to boost immunity.

Aerial yoga classes are offered throughout the week, including introductory series for adults and Teen Power programs for girls ages 11-17. Glow's $12 noontime classes are sure to be popular. "I love the idea of a reduced rate at this time of day—not only because I personally love bargains, but to offer people an incentive to carve time out of their busy lives for self-care," states Lori. Private group instruction for those who want to form their own aerial yoga "party" for special occasions is also available.

Workshops at Glow incorporate diverse healing modalities such as sound healing through its floating crystal bowl meditation, aromatherapy, acupressure, and reflexology, as well as blended classes with guest teachers.

Advance registration is required for all classes and events, as hammock space is limited and students have their own hammock for the duration of each class. To view all available offerings and to register, visit www.glowaerialyoga.com

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Fall & Winter Events in the Quiet Corner

Autumn is the most spectacular season in New England and it's still warm enough to get outside and relish the crisp air and beautiful foliage. Numerous businesses, towns and area organizations offer fun winter events as well—especially during the holiday season. So don't curl up and hibernate! Venture out and enjoy the many activities in the Quiet Corner.

Late Sept - Early November: **Walktober** is a more than month-long event full of educational, fun and free activities for all ages that showcases the people, places, history, nature and more throughout the Last Green Valley. The 25th anniversary offers over 200 walks, hikes, paddles, bike rides and events.

October: **Farmtober at Fort Hill Farms.** Visit in October and enjoy special harvest events—come discover the Power of Pumpkins!

Sunday, October 11 (10am-4pm): **Putnam Peddler's Market** is a curated, upscale, urban-style flea market located at the Putnam Farmer's Market Pavilion on Kennedy Drive.

Oct 17th & 18th: **Roseland Cottage Fine Arts & Crafts Show** in Woodstock. This popular show is always the weekend after Columbus Day.

Saturday, October 24th: The Great Pumpkin Festival in downtown Putnam. Arts & crafts, merchant & restaurants specials, live entertainment & music, and the popular Railroad Express Excursion Train.

October 31st: **Scarecrow Kingdom** at Davis Park in Killingly. Help decorate the town green with scarecrows; music and goodies provided.

October 30th: **Trick or Treat Street.** Put on your costumes and visit downtown Putnam from Jade Garden and River Front Commons all the way to Union Square; Participating merchants and local groups will have a treat for you!

October 30th (8:00pm) and October 31st (8:00pm & Midnight): **"The Rocky Horror Show"** a stage performance of the cult classic movie. Produced at The Bradley Playhouse in cooperation with The Complex Performing Arts Center. Tickets are $23.00 for adults and $20 for seniors and students.

The Shops at The Montgomery Ward Building will be open on Fridays until 8pm between Thanksgiving and Christmas for holiday shopping, featuring many unadvertised specials and surprises! For example, Adept Bodywork Massage Studio will offer pop up specials Dec 21st -23rd, where they will extend the time of the treatment purchased on a gift certificate.

Christmas Celebrations

November 27 (4pm): **Santa Comes to Town** at Riverfront Commons in Putnam. Hot chocolate and treats provided by WINY and each child receives a free candy cane from Santa.

November 27 4-H Camp, Black Friday Camper Game Day from (8 AM to 3 PM): Open to children ages 6-12. They can play while parents go shopping. $15.00 per child includes lunch and snacks.

November 27th (6-8pm): **Community Cup Show** at Sawmill Pottery in Putnam

November 28th (1-3pm): **Ornament Making Workshop** at Sawmill Pottery in Putnam

November 29th: Over 100 brightly lit floats plus marching bands and walkers that travel a 1.5-mile route through downtown Putnam. **The Holiday Dazzle Light Parade** kicks off the holiday season the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

December 4th: **Frosty's Big Night Out** at Davis Park in Killingly. Caroling, Cocoa and Frosty and Friends.

December 5th (1-3pm): **Handbuilt mug workshop** at Sawmill Pottery in Putnam

December 5th (8am-11am): **Breakfast with Santa** at the Killingly Community Center. $5/person, provided by the Danielson Lions plus singing with the Broad Street Singers.

Dec 5th (10am–2pm): **St. Nicholas Fair** at Christ Church in Pomfret. Popular annual holiday event featuring silent auction, basket raffle, holiday bakery, handcrafted gifts and much more.

December 6th From (2-4pm): **4-H Camp Open House** at the Lodge for camper families, alumni, friends, and whoever else wants to drop in. Spend the afternoon at camp for crafts, cookies, s'mores and more. Bring something to donate to a local animal shelter.

Dec 11-12: **Broad Street Players' Christmas Cabaret** at the Killingly Community Center.

December 4,5,11,12,18 & 19 (7:30pm) and December 6,13 & 20 (2:00pm): **"It's A Wonderful Life."** This quintessential heartwarming holiday classic is a story of commitment, sacrifice, and family. Tickets are $19.00 for adults and $15.00 for seniors and students.

December 31 from (5:30pm) to January 1 at (9:30am) – 4-H Camp New Year's Eve Slumber Party - open to children ages 6 -12. $25.00 per child includes dinner, snacks and breakfast.

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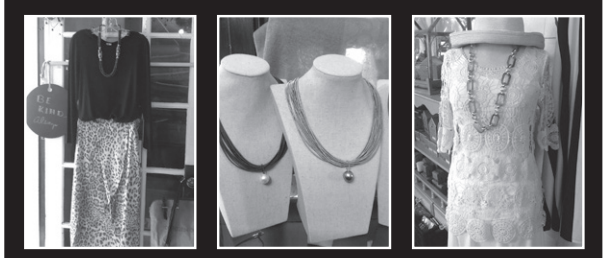
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NORTHEASTERN, CONNECTICUT

October

9, 10, 16, 17, 23, 24 at 7:30 p.m.
11, 18, 25 at 2 p.m.
And Then There Were None
Bradley Playhouse, Putnam, CT
Based on a 1939 book by Agatha Christie, this play was considered her best piece of "craftsmanship." Lured to an isolated island and manor house by an unknown host, ten individuals with something to hide are tried without judge or jury in this masterful mystery.
Non-musical: $19 for Adults • $15 for Senior Citizens/ Students/Children
www.thebradleyplayhouse.org

3rd, 6-8pm
East Woodstock Bandstand Benefit Concert
East Woodstock Congregational Church,
East Woodstock
Featuring the East Woodstock Cornet Band to raise funds for the much needed Bandstand repairs.
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3rd, 9:30am - 3pm
Faces at FAHS
Finish American Heritage Society
Canterbury, CT
A fine art & craft sale and exhibit.
Multimedia items and demonstrations.
Many artists and crafts people and exhibitors and will be there, lunch available. 9:30-3:00. See our FACES at FAHS facebook page for more details.

10th
A Taste for NOW
The Mansion at Bald Hill Banquet Center
Woodstock, CT
A carefully selected menu of Uncommom beers and wines paired with delectible bites from area restaurants, bakeries and caterers.

17th @ 9am
Tackle The Trail
Pomfret to Willimantic along the Airline Trail
Proceeds from this event support the QVCC Foundation's mission, to raise funds so that all residents of northeastern Connecticut are provided the opportunity to attend QVCC. Individuals $100/Relay Teams $150
www.qvcc.edu/tacklethetrail

17th & 18th
Roseland Cottage Fine Arts & Crafts Show
Woodstock, CT
Long-running juried show with 175 artists draws thousands to the grounds of Roseland Cottage. Music, Food Court, Museum Tours.
www.historicnewengland.org

30th @ 8pm & Midnight
Rocky Horror Picture Show
Bradley Playhouse, Putnam, CT
A stage performance of the cult classic movie. Produced at The Bradley Playhouse in cooperation with The Complex Performing Arts Center. Tickets are $23.00 for adults and $20 for seniors and students.
www.thebradleyplayhouse.org

16-17th
Spooky Nights
Brooklyn Fairgrounds, Brooklyn, CT
Sponsored by Brooklyn Parks & Recreation
Wagon rides and more with ghosts & goblins galore!
$8 per person (Wagon Ride boarding times 6:15pm, 7pm & 8:30pm - select boarding time when purchasing your tickets.
General admission is $5.
Visit **www.winyradio.com** for more info.

24th
"Great Pumpkin" Festival
Downtown Putnam, CT
Arts & Crafts, dowtown merchant & restaurant specials, live music, arrival of the ProvidenceWorcester Fall Foliage Exursion Train. **www.putnambusiness.org**

30th, 5-7pm
Trick or Treat Night
Downtown Putnam
Businesses from Jessica Tuesday's to Jade Garden Restaurant will hand out free candy to the kids.
Safe and fun!
www.winyradio.com

November

Mid-November through Christmas
Connecticut Audubon Holiday Store
Center at Pomfret, Pomfret, CT
Holiday nature store open through Christmas.
www.ctaudubon.org/CenteratPomfret

27th-29th
Artists Open Studios
Throughout northeastern, CT
Over 80 artists open their studios to the public throughout northeastern, Connecticut.
www.aosct.org

29th @ 5pm
Holiday Dazzle Light Parade
Downtown Putnam, CT
Over 100 brightly lit floats plus marching bands and walkers that travel a 1.5 mile route through downtown Putnam.
www.winyradio.com

December

4, 5, 11, 12, 18, 19 at 7:30 p.m.
6, 13, 20 at 2 p.m.
It's A Wonderful Life
Bradley Playhouse, Putnam, CT
In this quintessential Christmas story of commitment, sacrifice, and family, George Bailey, the "everyman" from Bedford Falls, dreams of adventure and escape. He sacrifices it all because of family obligations and civic duty in this heartwarming classic. "No Man is an island, entire of itself"…John Donne.
Non-musical: $19 for Adults • $15 for Senior Citizens/Students/ Children
www.thebradleyplayhouse.org

5th 10-2pm
Saint Nicholas Victorian Fair
Christ Church, Pomfret, CT
Christ Church's popular Holiday Fair with 'themed booths" that cater to various shopping specialties, free admission, proceeds benefit local charities.

On Going Events

Arts & Framing
Putnam, CT
Features art exhibits throughout the season.
www.artsandframingputnam.com

Connecticut Audubon Society - Center at Pomfret
Pomfret, CT
Lots to See & Do
www.ctaudubon.org

Silver Circle Studio
Putnam, CT
Features local artwork and art exhibits throughout the season. Offers a range of workshops and art classes for all ages. **www.silvercirclestudio.com**

Sawmill Pottery
Putnam, CT
Features a gallery pottery and gifts, open-studio space, classes (for kids and adults) and workshops throughout the season. **www.sawmillpottery.com**

The Complex Performing Arts Centre
Putnam, CT
Offering live performances, events, and classes throughout the year! Visit them online for details.
www.thecpac.org

The Stomping Ground
Putnam, CT
Live entertainment Tuesday through Sunday.
Find them on Facebook

The Vanilla Bean Cafe
Pomfret, CT
The Vanilla Bean features live folk music every Saturday @ 8 PM. and displays artwork from local artisans.
www.vanillabeancafe.com

facebook

Follow The Putnam Traveler on Facebook.

85 main

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- Worcester Telegram & Gazette

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